

# HASFM



## Announcements

The last meeting of the Historical and Archaeological Society of Fort Monroe (HASFM) was held 8 June 1976, 1130 - 1230 hours, Fort Monroe Officers Club.

Guest Speaker, Mr. George Hicks, Curator, Casemate Museum, discussed the 4th of July activities to be held at Fort Monroe. He also discussed the completed and projected displays in the museum.

LTC Kingston Winget (USA Ret.) was introduced as Acting President and discussed pending HASFM officer nominations and elections.

LTC Joseph Frankoski discussed the possibility of having the HASFM Information Officer appointed rather than elected.

Twenty-one persons attended the meeting.

The Daily Press recently carried an article "Casemate Museum Takes On New Look." This article dealt with new exhibits including what the paper termed, "One of the most interesting exhibits and also one of the grimmest." The post's confinement cells are those grim reminders of an earlier era--described by the Daily Press.

HASFM Members started work on the refurbishing of the cells in February 1975. Cleaning them was initially delayed until the cell occupants - pigeons - could be driven out and kept out. Iron bars on cell doors were scraped for rust and repainted with red lead paint to prevent further rusting. Staff members of the Casemate Museum completed the refurbishing in 1976.

Historical research was also conducted by HASFM using National Archives documents. This research indicated that the cells were considered to be among the worst in the country for confinement purposes. Efforts to upgrade them apparently conflicted with defense considerations.



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*The HASFM Newsletter is a publication of the Historical and Archaeological Society of Fort Monroe. It is presented to provide members of HASFM with information pertaining to items of historical interest concerning Fort Monroe and the surrounding communities.*

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The federalization of the national guard in August 1917 made it imperative that a new military force be created. In the official report, Wm. Wilson Sale, the Adjutant General, indicated that this new military force was particularly important since "spies, alien enemies and agents of a foreign force are stirring discord and discontent, and destroying the nation's sinews of war and commerce."<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the most difficult problem faced in organizing the Virginia Volunteers was the matter of procuring weapons. The War Department had been asked to provide 2,000 rifles and personal ordnance but at the close of 1917 only 250 caliber .45 Springfield rifles had been issued to the state. The Adjutant General tried to purchase Springfields from dealers but met with little success. It was hoped that Krag-Jorgensen rifles, soon to be replaced by Springfield caliber .30 rifles, would be transferred to the state.

(cont. next page)

# WWI

# VIRGINIA

# DEFENSE

What happens in the event that the National Guard is federalized and a state is left without a military force? This occurred during WWI in Virginia. The calling up of the entire Virginia National Guard left the Commonwealth with practically no militia to enforce law. To remedy this situation, the organization of volunteers was undertaken. According to the State Adjutant General<sup>1</sup> "nearly every community in the State responded promptly to the call...for volunteers and home defense companies with the result that twenty splendid companies have been mustered into the State service."





By the year's end two infantry battalions and twelve separate companies of volunteers had been formed. In Richmond the Richmond Light Infantry Blues Battalion of four companies had been organized. The Jo Lane Stern Battalion of four companies was raised at Roanoke. The towns of Ashland, Petersburg, Charlottesville, Hot Springs, Bedford, Montvale, Norton, Lebanon, Abingdon and Galax formed separate companies as well as another one in Richmond. The organizational titles are of interest: Washington Rifles (Abingdon), Hanover Grays (Ashland), Peaks of Otter Rifles (Bedford), Albermarle Rifles (Charlottesville), Blue Ridge Guards (Galax), Bath Rifles (Hot Springs), Russell Guards (Lebanon), Blue Ridge Rifles (Montvale), Clinch Valley Rifles (Norton), Richmond Howitzers (Richmond) and the A.P. Hill Rifles (Petersburg). Not to be outdone, the Roanoke units were designated as: Alleghany Rifles, Roanoke Blues, Roanoke Guards and Lee's Minute Men.

An aggregate strength of 1,455 had been raised in 1917 which included 69 officers and 1,386 enlisted men.<sup>3</sup>

According to LtCol Jo. Lane Stern, State Inspector, the personnel manning the volunteer units were composed "...of the highest class of the men of Virginia. Every class and calling are in the ranks. Every profession is represented, ministers, doctors, lawyers, bankers, college professors, businessmen of experience, working men of every vocation..."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Report of the Adjutant General of the Commonwealth of Virginia for the Year Ending December 3, 1917, (Richmond: Superintendent of Public Printing, 1918), p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 4.      <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p.30.

## French Engineers in the Revolutionary

The Casemate Museum has received a copy of French Engineers and the American War of Independence. This booklet was prepared by the Corps of Engineers of the French Army in 1975. In the Preface, Army Corps General Fanreau, Inspector of the Corps of Engineers states, "...the...brochure... gives a brief account of the principal events of the War of Independence then studies in some detail the French engineers who distinguished themselves in the war...showing the influence they had on the development of the American Corps of Engineers."

The seige of Yorktown is highlighted and Fort Monroe is described.



# VIRGINIA'S STANDING ARMY

Today's regular Army has its antecedents in the militia. But the colony of Virginia did have a regular Army besides a militia. And this force was not restricted to garrisoning forts--it was horse mobile and backed up by the militia.

In April 1684, the assembly formed a standing force for guarding the frontiers from Indian depredations. Four troops of horsemen, each consisting of thirty men, were raised by the act. Each man was to have a "good able horse for service, a case of pistols, a carbine, sword and all other furniture usual and necessary for horse-souldiers or troopers."

(This account was extracted from The History of Virginia's Navy of the Revolution, by Robert Armidstead Stewart, published in 1933).

the upper parts of the James, York, Rappahannock and Potomac rivers. It is noteworthy that in event enough volunteers could not be obtained, the governor could "issue forth his warrant" and obtain the number needed to fill out the troops. This was not a draft or conscription into the militia, but rather into a regular military force!

It seems that the primary mission of the troops (later termed Rangers) was to "range and scout about the heads of the rivers." In addition, they were to scout other places where it would be most likely to discover the enemy. Upon discovery of the approach of the enemy, the captain or lieutenant of the troops was to "give speedy advice thereof to the governor" or to the commander-in-chief. Movements of the enemy were to be ascertained and he was to be engaged if he committed some act of hostility.

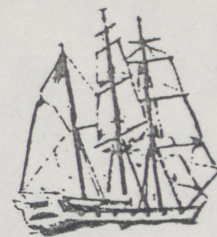
Officers of the militia were to place their units in a state of readiness upon approach or discovery of the enemy. They could expect to aid or reinforce the regular troops. For the first six days of service, the militia would "serve at their own charge." If service exceeded six days the militiamen would be paid.

It is interesting to note that several recent national security concepts were embodied in colonial Virginia law almost a century prior to the American Revolution. Provision had been made for a standing or regular force, conscription as necessary to bring the standing force up to strength, and the militia.

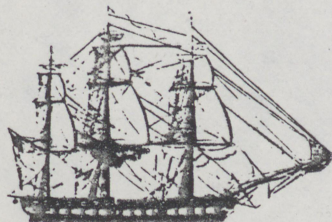




An exciting "escape and evasion" event took place in Hampton Roads during the American Revolution. Following is it's account by John Cowper, a lieutenant of the vessel, Marquis LaFayette, a privateer.



A frigate and a sloop of war lay under Newport News; two frigates and two sloops off Hampton bar; three warships at the Elizabeth River entrance near Sewell's Point and several warships (Cowper was unable to identify their type and number) near Old Point Comfort. Scattered throughout Hampton Roads were eighty to a hundred transports and merchant vessels.



The ship was launched in late 1780 (probably October) having been built near Suffolk, mounting 12 six-pounders. At about this time a British fleet arrived in Hampton Roads carrying an invasion force commanded by Major General Leslie. The British army landed, seized Portsmouth and sent detachments up the Nansemond River. The Marquis LaFayette was scuttled by her owners and sunk in 18 feet of water to prevent her burning by the British troops. Soon raised, the vessel was moved to Portsmouth as the British evacuated that town. To prevent enemy artillery from firing on the vessel, it remained near the mouth of the Nansemond where the river was wide. It was decided to make a run for the open sea, but it was difficult to procure seamen to navigate her. In early May 1781 (probably May 2d or 3d) the ship's captain, Joseph Meredith, and a Hampton pilot, Ross March, reconnoitered the positions of the British ships.

Captain Meredith decided to try to break out during that night although the moon would be in its second quarter. He ordered that although the guns were to be loaded they were not to be fired without special orders, even if fired upon. He felt that by returning fire, it would be obvious to the British that it was the American privateer attempting to escape. Meredith also insisted on dead silence. Key to his plan was to move among the transports, keeping one or more of them between the Marquis LaFayette and the ships of war.

At dark the privateer got underway with the ebb tide and favored by a moderate breeze. As the vessel cleared the river the wind became calm. It was impossible to return upriver so the ship was anchored. Fortunately, a north west wind brewed up and the privateer entered Hampton Roads. According to Cowper the first enemy ships passed were those under Newport News. A frigate was passed at a distance of a quarter-mile. The American vessel was soon among the transports passing them so closely that conversations could be heard. The enemy warships near Old Point Comfort were passed. However, near Willoughby's Point the Marquis LaFayette was hailed by a large ship. No answer was given, and in a short time Cape Henry was cleared.

Cowper attributed the escape to the rapid movement of the Marquis LaFayette and the inattentiveness of the British.





The following books are available on-post:

POST LIBRARY

Attack Aircraft of the West, by Bill Gunston, 1974

Critical examination of the histories of aircraft developed by the western powers.

Code of Honor, by LTC John A. Dramesi, 1975

Story of the POW who led the only organized escape from Hanoi prison.

The Evaders, by Leo Heaps, 1976

Story of the men who escaped the Battle of Arnhem with the help of the Dutch people.

Goebbels; The Man Who Created Hitler, by Viktor Reimann, 1976

Portrait of Hitler's propaganda chief and how he achieved his ultimate goal: the creation of the Fuehrer myth.

The Invisible Soldier, by Mary P. Motley, comp., 1975

Oral histories recording experiences of black American soldiers in WWII.

The Last European War, September 1939 - December 1941, by John Lukacs, 1976

States that the opening phase was the most decisive part of WWII.

The Nuremberg Mind; The Psychology of the Nazi Leaders by Florence R. Miale and Michael Selzer, 1975

New interpretation of the original responses of 16 major Nazi war criminals.

HQ TRADOC TECHNICAL LIBRARY

Fire and Stone; The Science of Fortress Warfare, 1660 - 1860, by Christopher Duffy, 1975

Detailed analysis of the arts of fortification and siegecraft.

The Military Intellectual and Battle; Raimondo Montecuccoli and the Thirty Years War, by Thomas M. Barker, 1975

Focuses on Montecuccoli as chief founder of the modern Austrian Army and as a top-ranking statesman.

Twenty Years and Twenty Days, Nguyen Cao Ky, 1976

Memoir by former South Vietnamese Air Force general.